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No. 112

## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CAMPBELL).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC.

July 25, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN CAMPBELL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN BOEHNER,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### A WEEK IN POLITICAL WONDERLAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. We begin another week in political wonderland. The Dow falls 100 points at the opening bell. What is it that we should do?

Well, if we had the knowledge and problem-solving skills of average college sophomore economic students, or women in a church study group, before the week is out, we would take some simple steps.

First, we would understand that, in a divided government with real economic challenges, no one group is allowed, especially those representing a minority opinion, to have their way entirely.

Then, we would begin by repealing the silly debt ceiling limitation, a law that was enacted in 1917 when the United States was about to embark upon a borrowing binge in World War I. It was used to look like we were fiscally responsible, a charade that we have done dozens of times since.

The fact is, these are debts we've already incurred, and the United States will honor them. What sort of theatrics are we going to go through until we finally own up?

Next, we would actually deal with the twin challenges of unsustainable spending and tax cuts along with the need to restore our economy and compete in a global business environment.

In an ideal world, my Republican friends would use their opportunity over the next 10 weeks to actually show how they would control spending in a way that is possible within the political process. In fact, they would have two opportunities between now and the election to actually shut down the government, if they didn't get their way, to highlight that effort.

We would also deal with a real consensus on things like military spending. There's broad agreement across party lines. For example, why shouldn't we, more than a half century after the end of World War II, 22 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, bring those troops home from Europe? Of course we can do that, and it's a start of many things that would help us restore balance to our military spending.

Next, we can deal meaningfully with our health care costs. Many parts of the United States spend far less money for Medicaid, Medicare than the high-spending areas. We know how to do this and, in fact, those low-spending,

high value areas provide better quality health care. Let's use the power of the Health Care Reform Act to accelerate those reforms and spread them around America, saving money and improving the quality of care.

Turn to the Tax Code. The American public would support a modest reasonable tax reform that would actually raise some revenue by closing unjustified tax loopholes and be able to deal with fairness and simplicity. More people would actually pay their taxes. We would have more revenue, and there would be more confidence in the system.

We should deal with our infrastructure deficit, something that doesn't get as much attention around here as it should. We have a serious deficiency in terms of basic infrastructure, transportation, sewer, water, trillions of dollars of a deficit that is building, undermining our competitiveness in a global economy. We would have modest user fees to support needed improvement, together with intelligent use of credit that would put hundreds of thousands of people to work, strengthening not just the economy, but improving our health and our global competitiveness.

We would reform agricultural spending. Those college students could figure out what the experts have told us: that we can actually provide more support for America's farmers and ranchers, improve the environment, put more resources into nutrition for our children in schools, all the time strengthening American agriculture, saving money. This isn't rocket science.

Finally, we would launch a very public American process on how to strengthen Social Security; protect that lifeline for our seniors in a way that brings people together rather than divides them. Any Rotary Club with 10 people, an Internet connection and a sheet of butcher paper could come up with one, two or three alternatives that would solve the problem over the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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